

Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-2029

Date: 21st March 2024

Author/Lead Contacts: Lucie Smith, Public Health Principal, Buckinghamshire Council.

Report Sponsor: Jane O’Grady

Consideration: Information Discussion
 Decision Endorsement

Please indicate to which priority in the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, [Happier, Healthier Lives Strategy \(2022-2025\)](#) your report links to.

| Start Well | Live Well | Age Well |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving outcomes during maternity and early years | <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the rates of cardiovascular disease | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving mental health support for children and young people | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving mental health support for adults particularly for those at greater risk of poor mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving mental health support for older people and reducing feelings of social isolation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the prevalence of obesity in children and young people | <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the prevalence of obesity in adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the physical activity of older people |

1. Purpose of report

1.1. In response to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority to improve places and helping communities to support healthy ageing, a Healthy Ageing Strategy has been developed. This report outlines the approach taken to the develop a Healthy Ageing Strategy and our ambition to become a more ‘Age Friendly Buckinghamshire’.

2. Recommendation to the Health and Wellbeing Board

2.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the contents of the Healthy Ageing Strategy and endorse the actions within it.

3. Content of report

3.1. Population projections suggest that over the next 20 years (2022 to 2042) the population aged 65 years and over in Buckinghamshire will increase by one third (34,944 more people) and the population aged 85 years and older will increase by two thirds (10,884 more people). The increase in the older population brings economic and societal opportunities, but these are most likely to be realised if older adults remain well and independent. However, the average number of years of ill health has risen for both men and women in Buckinghamshire and stands at over 15 years.

3.2. The aim of the strategy is for Buckinghamshire to become an 'age friendly community', based on the WHO's evidence-based [framework](#) of the 8 interconnected areas that support older people to live healthy, active and independent lives, which are:

- Outdoor space and buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Participating in society
- Volunteering and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support for health and wellbeing
- Respect and social inclusion (which in Buckinghamshire will run throughout the above areas rather than being a standalone area)

3.3. Basing the strategy on the age friendly community framework means action will take place to improve both the physical and social environments which will realise the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority to improve places and help communities to support healthy ageing, including building social connectedness. The strategy aims to do this by:

- Outdoor space and building: we will create high quality, accessible and social public spaces which are safe and help people to move around freely e.g. improving walkability of local areas by repairing pavements.
- Transport: we will promote accessible, affordable and appropriate travel options allowing people to access services they need e.g. enhance flexible transport options such as PickMeUp on demand minibus services.

- Housing: we will support the development of accommodation where people can live safely and comfortably, and which can improve physical and mental health, wellbeing and social connectedness e.g. build an age friendly approach to housing via the Housing Strategy and Local Plan.
- Participating in society: we will reduce and remove barriers to participation to foster engagement with activities and events which build a sense of belonging e.g. support the voluntary and community sector to develop and deliver projects to address social connectedness.
- Volunteering and employment: we will explore how to support older adults to continue in or re-enter employment in the face of falling older adult employment rates, as well as how to facilitate volunteering e.g. adopt age friendly employer pledge to increase age friendly employment practices.
- Communication and information: we will build positive and accessible communications and campaigns, and challenge negative stereotypes and stigma e.g. develop an age friendly communications strategy which tackles stereotypes and stigma.
- Community support for health and wellbeing: we will strengthen the health and wellbeing of communities and support the network of community-based groups e.g. support the Healthy Libraries programme to deliver more health and wellbeing activities which support residents to live and age well.

3.4. Given the breadth of this work and to make progress achievable we will prioritise areas in turn rather than tackle all simultaneously.

3.5. A multi-agency Age Friendly Bucks Partnership has been established to steer the prioritisation of areas and oversee and support a system-wide approach to delivery. The members are senior representatives from partners including the Council, NHS and voluntary sector. The Partnership meets quarterly and is chaired by Cllr Macpherson, Deputy Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

3.6. The Partnership has oversight of age friendly work, it is informed by several topic-specific strategies and groups, such as the Live Longer Better Alliance and the Physical Activity Strategy which are already working to improve healthy ageing in Buckinghamshire, this ensures emerging issues are not overlooked.

3.7. Prioritisation is informed by our residents and communities. A survey took place between 19th June – 17th July 2023 and 228 responses were received and the results have informed the year 1 priority of outdoor spaces and buildings, as residents raised a number of issues with the walkability of their local areas. Engagement will continue throughout the life of the strategy to ensure our work remains informed by and involves our residents. The second priority area for year 1 has been identified with partners and already agreed as a priority for the

Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board (participating in society, to tackle social isolation and loneliness).

- 3.8. The actions taken to progress against these priorities will be recorded, monitored and reviewed via the strategy's action plan and associated metrics. As new priorities are agreed in future additional projects will be added to the action plan.
- 3.9. To support our age friendly approach, in March 2023 Buckinghamshire successfully joined the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities which is run by the Centre for Ageing Better and affiliated to the WHO's Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Being a member of this network provides access to good practice, guidance and advice for our officers to support the successful delivery of a robust and evidence-informed age friendly approach. On reviewing our application, the Centre for Ageing Better complimented us on our draft Healthy Ageing Strategy, our political commitment with our Deputy Leader chairing the Partnership, and the allocation of public health resources to support the work programme.

4. Next steps and review

- 4.1. Following endorsement by the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board, the strategy will be promoted to partners and the strategy's action plan will be developed more as we work closely with our partners and communities.
- 4.2. Progress will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis.

5. Background papers

Appendix 1: Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024-29

World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Community [framework](#)